Met Office

Winter 2010/11

The following represents an assessment of the weather experienced across the UK during winter 2010 / 2011 (December 2010 to February 2011) and how it compares with the 1981 to 2010 averages.

Mean temperatures over the UK were 4.8 °C below average during December, 0.6 °C below average in January and 1.7 °C above average in February. The UK mean temperature for the winter as a whole was 2.4 °C, making it less cold than winter 2009/10 which was 1.6 °C but still the second-coldest winter since 1985/86 with 2.3 °C. Over Scotland and Northern Ireland it was the second-coldest winter since 1985/86 and 1978/79 respectively, with again only last winter having been colder. Over Northern Ireland it was equal sixth-coldest winter in the series from 1910. Over England and Wales it was the second-coldest since 1995/96, with only last winter having been colder.

December was exceptionally cold across the UK; the coldest December in over 100 years, with the highest number of air frosts in at least the last 50 years. It was the coldest calendar month since February 1986, and in Northern Ireland the coldest calendar month of the last 100 years. Chilly conditions persisted in early January, before a milder spell around mid-month then a return to colder weather. Mean temperatures finished somewhat below normal. Temperatures were generally above average in February, making it the mildest February since 2002. The number of air frosts was the fourth lowest in February in the last 50 years.

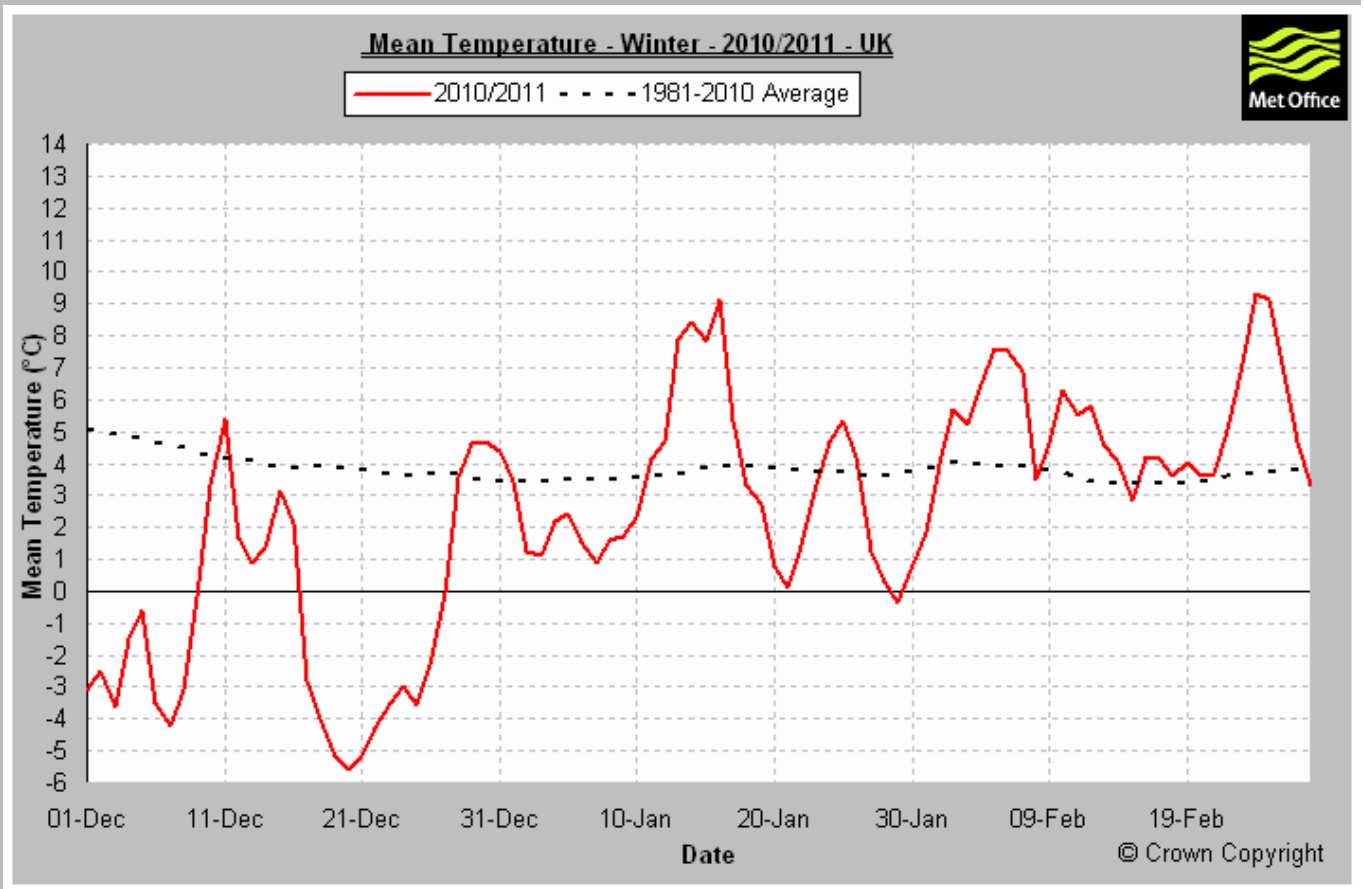
Precipitation amounts over the UK were well below average during both December (40% of average) and January (84%) but above in February (129%). In December, there were widespread snowfalls in the first week and from mid-month until Christmas. Iit was the driest December over the UK since 1963 and the third driest in the 100-year series. February was particularly wet in parts of northern England and southern Scotland, where it was one of the wettest Februarys in the last 100 years.

Sunshine durations were well above average during December (116% of average) particularly over Northern Ireland, which enjoyed its sunniest December in a series from 1929. January was also sunny (106%), again particularly over Northern Ireland and other western areas. However, February was relatively dull over most of the UK (74% of average), especially so across East Anglia and south-east England. Over Northern Ireland it was the sunniest winter on record in marked contrast to East Anglia and south-east England where it was one of the dullest.

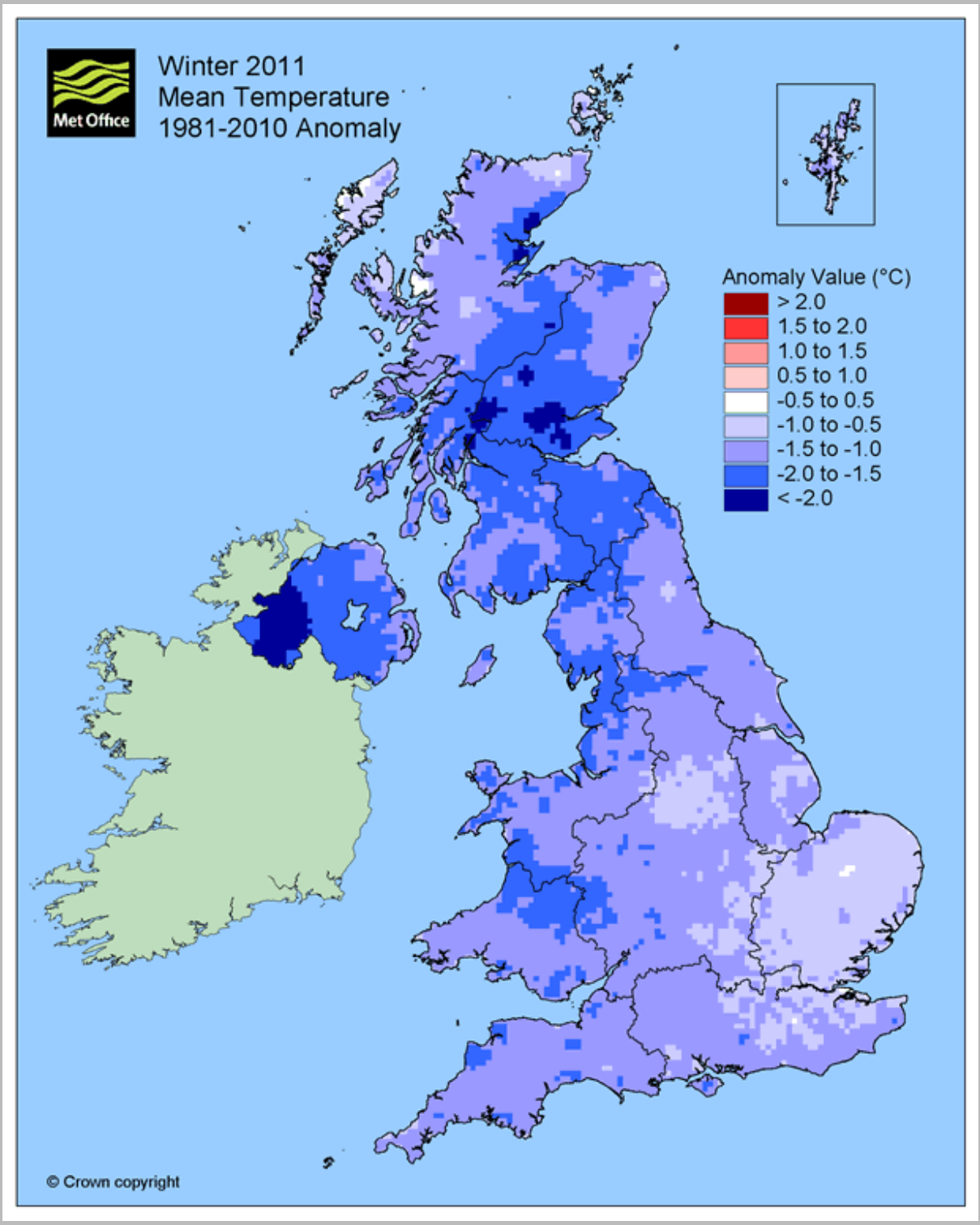
UK statistical summary

Mean temperature	Rainfall	Sunshine
The mean value is 2.4 °C, which is 1.3 °C below the 1981-2010 average.	The total is 265 mm, which is 80% of the 1981-2010 average.	The total is 149 hours, which is 94% of the 1981-2010 average.

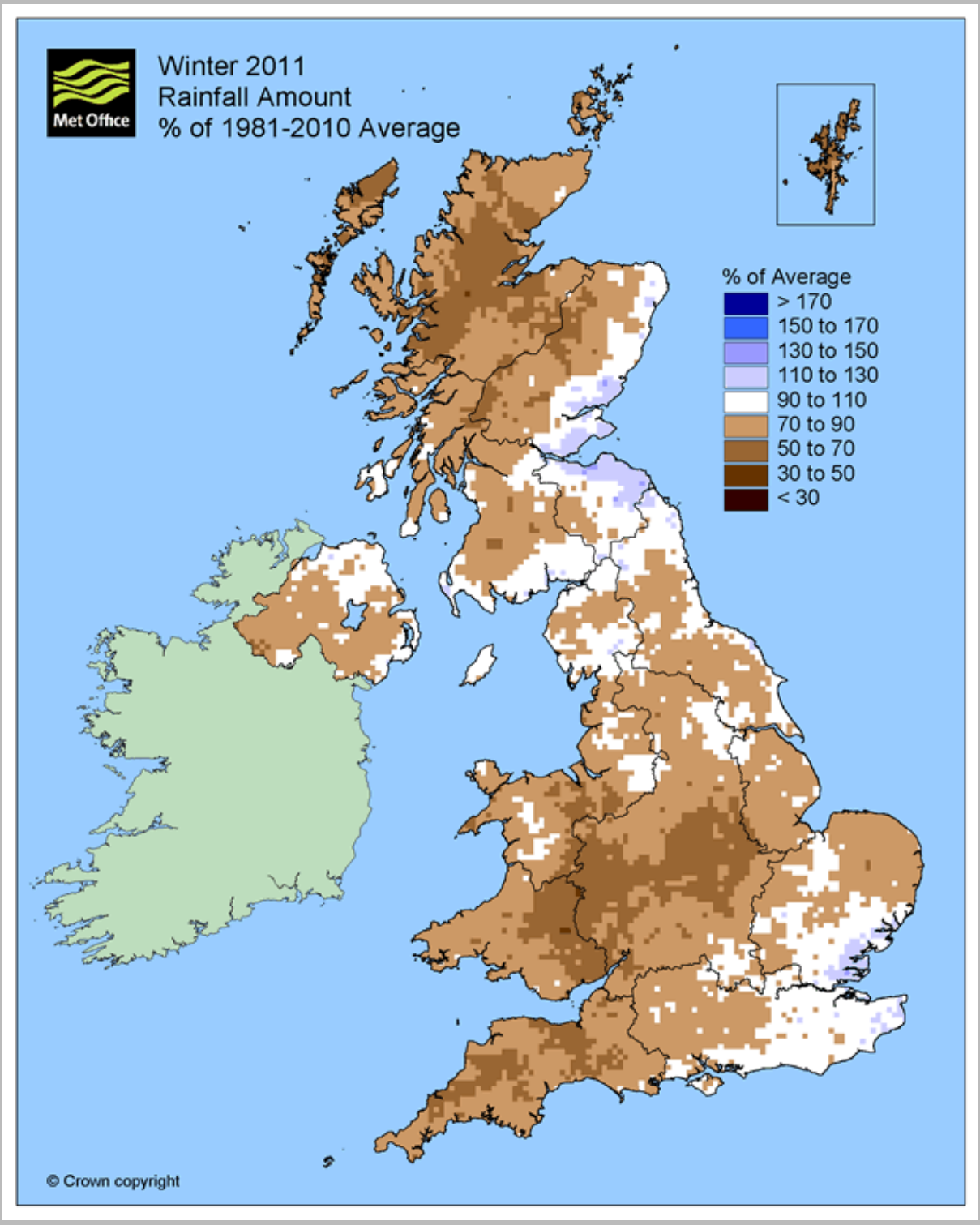
Graph of UK daily mean temperature for Winter 2010/11



Mean temperature anomaly (difference from average) map for Winter 2010/11



Rainfall percent of average map for Winter 2010/11



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